



## Cheese, Please!

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As an entrepreneur, you may feel frustrated sometimes by the lack of money available for the type of widespread advertising and promotions otherwise used by large companies. This semester, Cornell students in the Undergraduate Business Program class, AEM 2410: Marketing Plan Development demonstrated that lack of advertising money can actually force one into accessing a wealth of grassroot opportunities in cross promotions and collaborations. The students were charged with developing a marketing plan for a small, entrepreneurial cheesemaker. Putting on their sizeable thinking caps, they came up with examples that could be used by any number of food businesses. Here is a laundry list of fun and not-too-costly suggestions.

Event-based programs:

- **Cheese Bazaar** with fellow cheesemakers. For instance, we have a Cheesemakers Guild in NY. Consider putting on a bazaar at the farmers market, outside a winery, or in a downtown park. Multiple vendors provide excitement and variety and share the work load.
- **Farmers market.** Target active and fun-filled farmers markets for displaying your products. They frequently have special events-volunteer to be there with samples.
- **Tastings at local retailers.** Tastings are a proven method of driving sales by introducing new consumers to your product. Consumers shop at the grocery store. Put the 2 together and see if your local retailer is interested in having you in their store. You provide the excitement (and labor) and they benefit by drawing customers and generating added sales.
- **Tastings at local wineries.** Wine and cheese...a natural paring but why stop at wineries? Maybe even offer tastings at your local wine and liquor store. Most of them have tasting nights. Join a tastings group and/or offer some cheeses to go with the wine selection.

- **Help a restaurant develop a cheese board** for their appetizer or desert menu-match your cheeses with complementary cheeses (remember your local, fellow cheesemakers) to develop an offering. Even suggest some wines or beers to pair with the board!

### **Advertising & Promotion – Media:**

- **Web site and Google adwords.** The notion behind “adwords” is that you want to have the “correct” words on your website that will result in your company being listed on the first page of a google search. They're really hit or miss, and it may take a few tries to find a good keyword. The best way to spend as little as possible on adwords is to find unique words/combinations that are still relevant to the products. Here are a few adwords that you may want to experiment with when setting up your website.

Gouda cheese (or your particular type of cheese)

New York Cheese

European styled

Natural

Prestige

Quality

Organic

Dutch Gouda Cheese

Locally produced

Exceptional Taste

Social Occasions

Social Events

Healthy

Snack

- **Local and/or seasonal publications.** For example: Culinary Bounty Cookbook, NY Cheese Guild listing, Edible Finger Lakes Magazine. There are a number of places to target some well-placed advertising. Most are also on the web and may even have Twitter and Facebook sites.
- **Information brochure**-you just have to have one. What information you have on it could be critical though. How about the cheeses, taste profiles, and suggested cooking or pairing uses? Maybe a good mac and cheese recipe?

### **Packaging & Selling Options:**

- **Labels**-make sure your labels are styled in line with your whole business and marketing presentation (in other words be consistent with your brand image) and that they emphasize local. Make them colorful, use illustrations – bottom line, make them stand out.
- **Smaller packages**-many times having some smaller package sizes will drive sales to those looking for smaller sizes. They may also be more economical, especially when doing tastings. Opening smaller packages may result in less waste during tastings when you are only providing small samples to people. If you can't afford your own equipment, check out a colleague, collaborate with others.

So by utilizing a combination of special events, advertising and promotions and innovative packaging you can gain a strong foothold for your product in local and regional markets. Don't be afraid to experiment. Need help doing this?? Reach out to local high schools, community colleges and universities for students who are tech savvy and interested in business and marketing.

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**“Smart Marketing”** is a marketing newsletter for extension publication in local newsletters and for placement in local media. It reviews elements critical to successful marketing in the food and agricultural industry. *Please cite or acknowledge when using this material.* Past articles are available at <http://marketingpwt.aem.cornell.edu/publications.html>.